





combined with Nicholson to provide both (1) a non-deforming rubber portion that fills the gap between the end face and the flange and (2) a hollow portion surrounding this end face.

Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-3 are patentable over the applied references.

Applicant has added new dependent claims that include additional features of the invention that are not disclosed by Noboru or Nicholson, e.g., the side surface extends in the axial direction, the hollow portion surrounds a second side surface of the block portion, the second side surface extends in the axial direction, and the side surface and second side surface are substantially parallel. Thus, claims 6-9 are patentable over the applied prior art.

In view of the above, Applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

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Respectfully submitted,

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